

Statement for the Record

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Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity this afternoon to discuss with you United States multilateral diplomacy efforts, and the vital role of the Organization of American States (OAS) in promoting democracy throughout the Western Hemisphere.

On December 1, 2004, in his first foreign policy address shortly following his reelection to a second term of office, President Bush stated in Halifax, Nova Scotia, that: "The success of multilateralism is measured not merely by following a process, but by achieving results," and pledged "to work as far as possible within the framework of international organizations...to make those institutions more relevant and more effective in meeting the unique threats of our time."

Indeed, President Bush's commitment to effective multilateralism goes back to the very beginning of his first term. Less than 3 months after taking office in 2001 – and just before attending the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec – President Bush addressed the OAS Permanent Council in Washington, where he laid out the guideposts for what he called "our shared future and the important role the OAS will play in helping to shape it."

It is important to underscore that this early commitment to working with and through the inter-American system to advance U.S. foreign policy in the region served as a building block for the solid accomplishments that the OAS has achieved in recent years in addressing the critical issues facing the people of the Western Hemisphere. The OAS agenda is broad and sometimes daunting. And while much work and significant challenges are ahead, the record of achievement is impressive and speaks for itself.

Through the work of the U.S. Mission, the OAS is playing an increasingly important role in advancing U.S. interests in the hemisphere through policies and programs that complement and help achieve, in measurable ways, U.S. bilateral policy objectives. Past experience has demonstrated the advantages of working multilaterally with our partners in the hemisphere to promote mutual objectives, especially as free trade expands and regional initiatives, such as the Summit of the Americas commitments and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, are more broadly applied and accepted. In many ways, we are able to achieve consensus among the active members of the OAS, which

share similar democratic values, more quickly than in larger multilateral bodies like the United Nations or the World Trade Organization.

Multilateralism that Works

Multilateral diplomacy is an essential, indeed a vital, element of Bush administration policy in the Western Hemisphere to pursue goals in key strategic areas, including democracy, regional stability, economic prosperity and security, counterterrorism, and international crime and drugs.

While most U.S. bilateral and multilateral goals in the region have remained constant for a decade or more, the enhanced hemispheric commitment to these goals has resulted in greater demand for the OAS to implement new and innovative policies and programs that require additional resources. This is due to a confluence of factors: a growing consensus among member states in favor of like-minded political action, the success of the Summit of the Americas process and the OAS secretariat's role in facilitating implementation of Summit initiatives, and an active U.S. Mission able to gain acceptance by other OAS member states of key U.S. priorities.

Multilateralism works in the Hemisphere because of its long history and by the OAS staying true to the principles upon which it was founded: representative democracy, respect for human rights, and the recognition that all states are equal partners. The nations of the Western Hemisphere, including the United States, understand that we are bound together by common interests and values. Today, these common interests and values converge on democracy, economic growth through free trade, and good governance. With the exception of Cuba's lone tyrant, the hemisphere has embraced democracy — a right of all peoples and which governments all must promote and defend — as the *sine qua non* of social, political and economic development. There is, in fact, no other region of the world that has such an explicit commitment to democracy.

A Commitment to Democracy

With the advent of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in September 2001, no OAS member state can be a disinterested spectator to what occurs in our Hemisphere. Any actions that undermine democratic order or that threaten the security and well being of the region are of legitimate concern to all.

Today, the notion that winning elections alone is sufficient to be permanently considered a democracy has been challenged in the Americas. Elected leaders must now govern justly and democratically to maintain their legitimacy. Those who flout democratic institutions and principles or fail to meet the rising expectations of electorates can unleash forces that threaten regional stability, thwart democratic development, and stand in the way of economic growth.

Most citizens of the Hemisphere become aware of the OAS through its work in promoting democracy and human rights, specifically OAS electoral observation missions; special missions to address internal political conflicts, such as in Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela; and, increasingly, through the application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which established a graduated series of preventive and remedial measures to promote and defend democracy.

Member states have come to rely on OAS programs to strengthen democracy and democratic practices and institutions, given the long-term progress achieved in that area in the past two decades. The United States is thoroughly cognizant of the value of multilateral efforts in this regard and regularly supports OAS democracy programs with funding from many different foreign operations accounts.

Acting under the Democratic Charter, or in the spirit of the Charter, the OAS has helped and is helping those member states where democratic practices or institutions are challenged, including Haiti, Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Colombia.

Haiti

In Haiti, working through the OAS our focus has been on helping the transition to a functioning democracy. Last Fall, the acting Secretary General led a mission there with USOAS participation. To prepare for a series of elections scheduled to begin in October of this year, OAS and UN technical experts are working with Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). In particular, OAS is handling voter registration, a complex and difficult task in Haiti. Despite earlier delays, registration is finally proceeding efficiently.

While registration has not been easy, with the security situation marred by violence, we are already seeing tangible results. As of July 26, the OAS now has 310 permanent voter registration centers, and 23 mobile centers, open around the country. Approximately 800,000 voters have been registered to date. While registration is scheduled to end in early August, it is likely to be extended by the CEP.

Venezuela

In Venezuela, the OAS undertook months of negotiation with the government, opposition and civil society groups to reach an agreement on a way ahead to overcome the political polarization that led to political upheaval in that country in 2002 and 2003.

Working through the Friends of the OAS Secretary General — a *bona fide* multilateral effort to reach a negotiated resolution to the political impasse in Venezuela — the U.S. and our hemispheric partners helped clear the political way for the August 15, 2004 recall referendum on the Venezuelan president. OAS monitors then observed that process.

Has Venezuela's political polarization faded away due to these OAS efforts? Certainly not. Political tensions still fester, human rights concerns still abound, and the increasing concentration and exercise of power by the duly-elected Executive branch remains worrisome. But OAS member states remain engaged and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission remains vigilant.

On July 12, 2005, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza sent OAS Special Envoy Ruben Perina to Venezuela, and just this past week has confirmed that the OAS will have a small presence on hand in Venezuela during the upcoming municipal elections in August. This will not be an electoral observation mission. Rather, the visit will serve to begin preparations for a full OAS observation of Venezuela's national legislative elections in December. Considering the level of polarization in Venezuelan society today, only a significantly hands-on mission that can operate under internationally recognized standards can expect to achieve its objectives.

Ecuador

After the April 2005 change of government of Ecuador, the OAS Permanent Council sent a high-level mission, at the invitation of Ecuadorian authorities, to work with officials of that country and with all sectors of Ecuadorian society in their effort to strengthen democracy. This mission also included U.S. participation. During this visit, April 26-30, the OAS mission met with government authorities and political party officials, as well as with representatives of the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, the Catholic Church, unions, indigenous groups and others. Secretary General Insulza is now preparing a follow up mission.

Nicaragua

On June 15, Secretary General Insulza led a high-level OAS mission to Nicaragua at the request of government of President Enrique Bolaños. The visit was intended to help find a solution to the country's political and social crisis.

The four-day mission came on the heels of a Declaration of Support to Nicaragua, adopted by the hemisphere's foreign ministers at the OAS General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, one week before. The OAS delegation met with officials of government, political parties and civil society and religious organizations, as well as representatives of the international community.

The Secretary General subsequently named former Argentine foreign minister Dante Caputo as the OAS special envoy to facilitate dialogue in Nicaragua and work to strengthen that country's democracy. Mr. Caputo traveled to Nicaragua on June 29 to continue discussions initiated during the Secretary General's visit two weeks earlier. His mission succeeded in helping the parties to the crisis to resume their dialogue, and to spur

national dialogue between various segments of Nicaraguan society. This will help safeguard representative democracy in the period leading up to the 2006 presidential elections which the OAS is expected to observe.

Bolivia

Through statements by the Chairman of the Permanent Council and other outlets, the OAS has consistently expressed hope that the political crises in Bolivia be resolved and that agreement will be reached through dialogue to bring about national reconciliation and respect for the rule of law and constitutional order, in accordance with the terms of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Just yesterday, July 26, a special envoy of the Bolivian Government addressed a Special Meeting of the Permanent Council. *Inter alia*, Bolivia has asked the OAS to adopt a program of cooperation with the Government of Bolivia to assist with its upcoming elections for Congress, President and Vice-President. Through a resolution, adopted by consensus, the OAS agreed to this request.

The OAS is also expected to agree to monitor December's elections in that country.

Colombia

In Colombia, the OAS plays a critical role through its mission on the ground by helping the Colombian government institute a transparent, internationally monitored peace process that results in a cessation of hostilities and the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of illegal armed groups as an important means of promoting human rights for all Colombians.

Pursuant to its most recent quarterly report to the Permanent Council, the OAS Special Mission stated that nearly 4,000 members of the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) have laid down arms since last November, and the territories where they once operated are now ready to be occupied by the institutions of government, paving the way for civilian status for thousands of people.

The OAS has also made the protection of human rights in Colombia a top priority. Through a Permanent Council resolution last year, the members states mandated the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to ensure that the role of the OAS in the peace process is fully consistent with human rights and international humanitarian law. These safeguards have allowed the Colombian peace process to move forward in a credible and efficient fashion..

Election Observation Missions

Election observation is a key element in OAS efforts to strengthen democracy in the Hemisphere. The OAS enjoys a longstanding reputation for impartiality and technical competence in election observation. Over the last 18 months the OAS fielded election observer missions in Grenada, Guatemala, Suriname, the Dominican Republic, Panama, El Salvador, Ecuador, Venezuela, and in Nicaragua.

These missions, however, are not infallible and pose significant challenges for the OAS and its credibility in ensuring the transparency of the process. In light of last year's protracted referendum process in Venezuela, we must take a strong look at the future of electoral observer missions as guardians of free and fair elections.

The OAS must review the function these missions will play, and ask the questions: What is the future role of electoral observation missions as guarantors of democracy? Is it acceptable for these missions to scrutinize the results, but only to be present for selected parts of the process? Is it appropriate for electoral observation missions to have to negotiate their size and the modalities of their work?

The response is that for these missions to continue they must be afforded timely and unfettered access from the beginning through the entire process. The OAS must identify the problems that arose in Venezuela, learn from them, and prepare accordingly for future missions.

Human Rights

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is often referred to as "the crown jewel" of the inter-American system, and the United States is proud to be its largest financial supporter.

The U.S. is the largest financial supporter of the IACHR. Our continued support for the Commission stems from our firm belief in the unique value and utility of the Commission as a defender of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It provides a forum for persons — whether acting through NGOs or on their own — to seek redress of alleged human rights abuses. Members of the Commission or its Special Rapporteurs also make site visits to countries in the hemisphere where abuses of human rights have been reported.

One of the most important things it does is produce country reports — well documented assessments of human rights conditions and issues in countries throughout the region. Over the last year alone, the Commission has issued thorough reports on the human rights situation in Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti, Guatemala and Colombia. The visits, press releases and reports issued by the Commission works to reduce the incidence of human rights abuses in the hemisphere by focusing a spotlight on trouble spots.

In one recent example of its work, the Commission and its Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression expressed concerns about the implications for freedom of the press posed by a new law on media responsibility in Venezuela. We find it unfortunate that the government of that country, in response, opted to publicly attack the Commission, rather than take the concerns of the Commission on board in an effort to perfect its draft legislation.

Two other OAS specialized organizations also address human rights issues of women and children: The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN). CIM focuses its efforts on the promotion and protection of Women's Human Rights. It also follows closely trafficking in persons, violence against women, and gender equity and equality issues in the hemisphere. The IIN addresses matters related to children, and has identified the following key areas as its chief priorities: Children's Rights, International Parental Child Abduction, and National Child Care Systems. The Institute has also performed studies on commercial child sexual exploitation and is shifting its focus to the child and the family.

Security: OAS Counterterrorism and Counternarcotics Initiatives

The war on transnational organized crime, including terrorism and national security are critical elements in our hemispheric agenda to preserve democratic order and another area where the OAS has enacted important effective new approaches. U.S. efforts have proven to be effective at promoting hemispheric cooperation through the OAS by encouraging governments to improve their efforts and capacities in a number of security related areas, while achieving a "multiplier effect" in our bilateral relationships. These efforts have proven especially significant with countries where we were unable to mount a significant bilateral program on certain key national security objectives.

The Western Hemisphere responded to the events of 9/11 with greater resolve than any other area in the world, largely working through the OAS, the first international organization to mobilize in response to the attack on the U.S. homeland. Less than a year after the 9/11 attacks, the OAS adopted the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism.

Implemented through the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) — established in 1999 to coordinate member states' activities against terrorism — this vigorous new convention seeks to strengthen border and financial controls, increase cooperation among law enforcement authorities, and address threats to airport, seaport and cyber security. A continuing positive trend in the hemisphere has been the high-level of political will to combat terrorism. Although counterterrorism capacity and expertise remain lacking in many states in the hemisphere, countries actively continued efforts to strengthen their counterterrorism regimes along all fronts, with an emphasis on cooperation.

Since 9/11, CICTE has moved from the sidelines to the center of hemispheric counterterrorism cooperation. CICTE has been recognized by the UN Security Council as a model regional counterterrorism organization. To date, CICTE has delivered over \$4 million in counterterrorism capacity-building assistance in the hemisphere, of which 85% has been U.S. voluntary contributions.

On another front to secure our hemisphere from new and traditional threats is the ongoing effort to combat drug trafficking and drug abuse in the Americas. Leading the charge is the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD).

CICAD is the principal venue in the Western Hemisphere for advancing counternarcotics cooperation. The Commission serves as both a policy forum for governments and its Secretariat provides a wide range of practical program and technical support to the Member States. CICAD has many component parts, but the one that stands out is the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM). Under the MEM, experts evaluate individual country submissions documenting efforts to combat drug abuse and trafficking. The first full round of evaluations was published in January 2003.

Under Canadian chairmanship — and strong U.S. support — in 2004 – 2005 CICAD has paid special attention to enhancing cross-border cooperation between neighboring states, combating transnational organized crime, and intensifying domestic demand reduction programs.

The OAS also has been a leader in addressing many of the different manifestations of transnational illicit activities such as humanitarian mine action programs, the adoption of inter-American treaties on illicit trafficking in firearms and transparency in conventional arms acquisitions, and combating the problem of trafficking in persons.

In 2004, in an effort spearheaded by the United States, the OAS created the Office of the Coordinator on Trafficking in Persons. It is estimated that between 600,000 and 800,000 individuals, mainly women and children, are trafficked around the globe every year — 18,000 to the United States alone.

The United States is proud to be in the forefront of these OAS efforts, which aim to sensitize governments to these problems and to the dangers posed by criminals and terrorists, to suggest courses of action to confront the problem, and to foster regional cooperation against all illicit transnational activities and their connections among them.

Development

The OAS has been involved in development since the days of the Alliance for Progress, an objective the U.S. continues to support.

The relatively small voluntary fund receives an average of \$8.0 million dollars a year that provides grants which the OAS secretariat and member states leverage to obtain external funds from observer states, the international development banks and other donors. The office of Sustainable Development of the OAS is particularly successful in leveraging World Bank Global Environment Fund resources which it manages on behalf of the member states. The OAS also has an \$8.0 million fellowship program which has finances graduate level education for citizens of all member states. The Fellowship program has partnered with the Fulbright Program and the LASPAU programs which has allowed a pooling of resources to the advantage of all. The member states that have the smallest and more vulnerable economies benefit the most from these programs since they are not all members of the larger financial institutions and benefit also from the assistance that OAS specialists provide in developing projects and obtaining additional funding for them.

The OAS development council also sponsors ministerial level meetings in the areas of education, science and technology, labor, sustainable development, and culture. Ministers and other high level representatives discuss best practices and new policies which have been particularly successful. These meetings are linked to the Summit of the Americas process and serve to advance the implementation of initiatives approved by the democratically elected heads of state.

Besides the OAS development council, the specialized organizations of the OAS also play an important role meeting development needs of the member states.

OAS General Assembly

On June 5-7, the United States hosted the 35th annual OAS General Assembly (OASGA), for the first time since 1974, with the participation of both President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, signaling the Bush Administration's continued commitment to bolster democracy in the Americas multilaterally.

Presiding over the inaugural ceremonies, Secretary Rice framed the discussion, stating: "Delivering the benefits of democracy is a dramatic challenge indeed. And the OAS has an essential role to play — a role that is defined by the Inter-American Democratic Charter ... The Democratic Charter must become the core of a principled, effective multilateralism for the Americas."

As the Secretary noted, we must act on the Charter to secure democracy where it is threatened, and wherever a free society is in retreat. We must act on the Charter to secure democracy with the rule of law. And we must also act on the Charter to advance democracy where it is absent.

Under the theme "Delivering the Benefits of Democracy," the assembly spoke to the challenges facing the hemisphere. The citizens of the Americas have embraced

democracy as the best form of government, and have reasonable expectations that it will deliver a better quality of life.

To that end, the OASGA succeeded in reaching some very important objectives to help strengthen democracy, promote prosperity, enhance security and protect human rights.

The Declaration of Florida is a multilateral commitment to advance the hemisphere's democratic agenda and give "teeth" to the Inter-American Democratic Charter in order to strengthen its application. Building on previous achievements of the inter-American community in defense of democracy — Resolution 1080, the Washington Protocol, the Quebec Summit, and the Democratic Charter — the Declaration, and the accompanying Chilean Resolution, empower and give the Secretary General a new mandate to move the hemispheric commitment to the Charter and its principles beyond rhetoric towards concrete, measurable outcomes that give the document practical relevance in order to help fulfill its promise.

Among the important achievements set forth in the document, it:

- Tasked Secretary General José Miguel Insulza to propose initiatives — some may refer to this as a Plan of Action — for the timely application of the provisions of the IADC to address threats to democracy;
- In a reaffirmation of the Secretary General's authority, charged him with bringing to member states' attention situations that may require action under the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IADC);
- Charged the Permanent Council with considering the Secretary General's recommendations and working with him in applying the IADC;
- Created openings for civil society input into the efforts of the Secretary General and Permanent Council for action under the IADC.
- And it also set a new and important marker, establishing that adherence to the IADC is the standard for member states' full participation in the inter-American systems. In other words, the IADC is the way into the OAS, and the way out.

To promote prosperity, the General Assembly also approved a U.S. sponsored Resolution convoking a special meeting to channel the efforts of all inter-American agencies into a coordinated, strategic plan for economic growth and development that will provide for improvements in education, gender equity, and public/private partnerships.

To improve security, the General Assembly mandated tighter controls on Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS); greater transparency in small arms and light weapons transfers between countries will help safeguard them from use by terrorists. They also instructed further cooperation to combat gangs, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and other manifestations of transnational crime.

On human rights, three distinguished candidates were elected to serve on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, including Paolo Carozza of the United States, a law professor at Notre Dame University, and an expert on international human rights law and Latin American legal systems. The General Assembly also adopted an inter-American plan for the protection of the human rights of migrants and immigrants, which includes large numbers of retired Americans living in the hemisphere.

As evidenced by our leadership at the OASGA in Fort Lauderdale and our active participation, the U.S. values multilateralism. We look forward to the new dynamic Secretary General to take this mandate and run with it. And we also look forward to taking the next steps at the next Summit of the Americas, to be held in Mar del Plata, Argentina on November 4-5.

Summits of the Americas

The Summits of the Americas are the pinnacle of U.S. multilateral engagement in the region. Held every 2-3 years, the Summits are the only meetings of all democratically-elected Heads of State in the Western Hemisphere. They enable the President to strengthen ties with hemispheric leaders. Furthermore, the Summits underscore our government's commitment to democracy, growth, and proactive multilateralism in the region.

The active defense of representative democracy has been in the forefront of the Summit process since the Quebec Summit in April 2001. As a result of the Summit, Secretary Powell was in Lima, Peru on the momentous day of September 11, 2001 to sign the Inter-American Democratic Charter. On that day, while terrorists tried to send a message of hate, we were working with our partners in the Americas to send a message of hope and freedom.

President Bush took the initiative to fight corruption in the Hemisphere by issuing Proclamation 7750 immediately before the Special Summit in Monterrey in 2004, where leaders committed themselves to "deny safe haven to corrupt officials, those who corrupt them, and their assets."

Building on initiatives to strengthen the quality of education in our own country, President Bush pledged to support Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. These Centers have trained 12,500 teachers in literacy education so far, benefiting about 415,000 children.

As of April 2005, roughly 640,000 individuals in the hemisphere were receiving HIV/AIDS treatment. The United States took the lead in this effort, providing antiretroviral therapy to approximately 350,000 persons domestically. Furthermore, through the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief, the United States has supported treatment for 4,500 persons in the focus countries of Guyana and

Haiti, and will spend over \$72 million in FY 2005 for continued efforts in these countries."

At these Summits, we urge leaders to commit their governments to concrete, achievable, short-term initiatives so that we can hold them accountable. Some excellent examples from our last Summit in Monterrey include:

- cutting in half the cost of sending remittances by 2008;
- tripling private sector lending through the Inter-American Development Bank to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises;
- strengthening property rights and expanding the use of property as collateral; and
- significantly reducing the time and cost to start a business.

The next Summit will address the theme of "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance." The challenge of this Summit will be to build on the past pro-trade, pro-growth, and pro-democracy consensus to reach new heights in the Summit process.

At this Summit, there will be a debate on the role of international financial institutions, and the overall atmosphere will be linked to the status of our trade agenda. That is another important reason CAFTA is so important. CAFTA will strengthen our ability to credibly promote free trade in the region. We also need to help countries which invest in their own people, by providing broad, high-quality access to education, training, and business opportunities. We must also continue to press forward on democracy, which remains fragile in the region.

At this year's Summit in Argentina, we will send the message that we will continue to work constructively with our neighbors to secure democratic freedom and create more and better opportunities for all citizens of the hemisphere.

The Challenges Ahead

Over the last decade, the hemisphere, and indeed the OAS, have made enormous progress, but we have not, however, managed to fully erase the legacy of decades of poverty, corruption, and, even, wrong-headed policies.

The hemisphere today faces very serious challenges. Economies in the region are not growing fast enough to generate sufficient jobs for growing populations, let alone deal with extreme poverty. Corruption and inefficiency have stunted development and spawned popular discontent. All of this has combined to give rise to questions concerning the value of democracy in the Americas.

Surmounting these challenges will require leadership on the part of individual hemispheric presidents and prime ministers, their governments, their societies and, particularly, the political elites of each country. Today, the OAS is poised to tackle the

substantive challenges facing the nations of the Western Hemisphere, but it will require political will by the member countries if it is to succeed.

It is critical that the OAS remain engaged and proactive. And from the U.S. standpoint, this means continuing to ensure that multilateralism in the Americas is not pursuing the lowest common denominator but, rather, pressing the OAS to practical, achievable objectives that produce tangible, measurable results.

To that end, the United States is firmly committed to working and strengthening the OAS and remains its largest contributor. We pay almost 60% of the OAS operating budget each year (\$44,395,000) and contribute between \$10M - \$15M annually to specific OAS activities, such as development projects, promoting transparency, fighting drugs, terrorism and trafficking in persons, and electoral observation missions, to name but a few.

The OAS provides significant value-added and can play an important catalytic role in these efforts. Among the primary challenges ahead for the Organization:

- Acting on the Declaration of Florida's mandates, and effectively applying the Inter-American Democratic Charter to all the countries of the hemisphere, leaving no country out;
- Expanding the participation of civil society organizations in the work of the OAS, pursuant to existing OASGA resolutions and the Declaration of Florida;
- Looking for ways to bolster the effectiveness of OAS Electoral Observation Missions;
- Providing institutional capacity building initiatives in each country to complement efforts toward the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which is the key to generating jobs, fostering growth and fighting poverty effectively;
- Finding additional ways to address the post-9/11 security threats from internal and home-grown terrorists, and international crime;
- Modernizing the Inter-American Defense Board and the Defense College to meet the security challenges of our era;
- Helping countries deal effectively with burgeoning domestic crime rates at a time of high citizen insecurity;
- Implementing the mandates that emerge from this year's Summit;
- And what I call "giving teeth" to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption.

The U.S. stands ready to work side by side with our partners in the region, and with and through the OAS, to meet these challenges.

As President Bush said at the OAS General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale: "To give our children a better tomorrow, our citizens must see that democracy delivers more than promises. They need to see in their daily lives that their hard work and enterprise are rewarded ... And when the people of the Americas see that opportunity and social

mobility are real, they will know that in a free and democratic society, the only limit of how far they can go is the size of their dreams.”

Thank you very much.